



Vote for Terry Park! The Common Sense Man

John Adcock

This is the chicken or egg conundrum. Which should the 40-year-old disillusioned schoolteacher, Terry Park, try to reform first: the whole of British society or its antiquated education system? With his new girlfriend, Susan Mansfield – a radical, strong-willed university lecturer – he tries to do both by forming his own political party and standing for Parliament. But Terry soon has more problems on his plate than he'd bargained for!

On the Doorstep

Terry Park, a teacher standing as a Common Sense Party candidate at a general election, is doorstep canvassing. Where doors are opened – which is seldom – he meets indifference and occasional hostility. A too frequent response is: “Makes no difference who wins mate, so don't waste our time or yours”. But then he is encouraged by one voter.

The turnout on general election day was easily the worst on record despite warm, sunny weather. Agents despaired, candidates hung their heads, bored poll officials twiddled their thumbs or knitted mittens, voters ignored appeals, canvassers gave up, the media reported apathy, returning officers anticipated quick counts: home by midnight!

Undeterred by this ubiquitous indifference, Terry had made use of the last day to stand in streets giving out leaflets or knock on yet more doors. It was the remarkable response at one door that raised Terry's spirits. In a Victorian villa an elderly lady, well dressed, said how interested she was in the CSP manifesto and how it gave hope to her and the country.

‘But oh dear, why are you so timorous?’ she asked. ‘You need to attract attention by pushing forward really radical policies that will make people see they can prosper only by adopting revolutionary strategies.’

‘So what would you propose?’ asked Terry. ‘We already have ...’

‘Let me go on,’ she said as she placed a

hand on the door as if to steady herself. ‘Violent criminals, drug dealers, people traffickers and so-called ‘road rage’ murderers need to be imprisoned on a secure, basically equipped, remote Scottish island because, put simply, they are not wanted. As for vandals, strongly-fenced camps patrolled by tough guards with hungry hounds should be built on windswept moors – camps which they can vandalise to their hearts’ content provided they are made to live in what they’ve vandalised. Proportional representation is a century overdue. Taxation and benefits systems even simpler than those you suggest are vital, and access to low-cost legal services is essential. So, instead of the dysfunctional society we have now, show people what Britain *could* be like: a streamlined, 21st century republic owned *by*, governed *by* and *for* its people. Give electors a *real vision*, a *real* alternative, *real* hope! Let them see how fine life *might* be if our ancient, stultifying institutions were swept aside.’

‘Madam, that’s just ...’

‘You’ll get nowhere with your half-hearted programmes. People are detached from

politics. Nothing short of a gigantic shock wave will revive their interest. You must shake them. Be strong, courageous, ruthless. Remember, young man, faint heart ne'er won fair lady!

'Amazing!' Terry said. 'But I don't think people ...'

'Don't tell me, Mr Park, you don't think people would accept it?'

'Exactly.'

'Then try them! You've nothing to lose because they won't accept what's on offer now. They've had enough and don't care anymore, and because of that you'll find they won't listen to you or anyone else; indifference will be your greatest problem. Believe me, I should know.'

'You should?' Terry looked at her intently.

'Yes. I ran as an independent in two general elections. Hemmings was my maiden name, Heather Hemmings. I stood for The Fair Play Party. I was its only member! I lost my deposit twice, but that wasn't what upset me: what upset me was the willingness of people to embrace mediocrity and be bamboozled into thinking they had an electoral choice. They hadn't, and they've had no real choice since the let-downs of the post-war Labour government.' She paused again as if to regain her breath. 'Do you want to hear any more?'

Terry nodded.

'The 1945 Labour government, with its massive majority and a war-worn electorate aching for change, took the wrong road.'

'It did?'

'Yes, what was needed then, and what that government had the strongest-ever mandate to provide, was a firm basis for an egalitarian, inclusive society where birth, school, dress, class, elitism, snobbery, tradition, ritual, ceremony, uniform, regalia, wealth, station, privilege, accent, and all the other evil, socially divisive and dangerous features *had no place*. Those pre-war insulting absurdities could have been rooted out, broken up, and burned on a

public bonfire. To do that they needed to close the public schools, open up the old universities so they admitted students on an ability-only basis, reform the Civil Service from top to bottom, institute a hefty wealth tax, scrap the honours system and the House of Lords, and revolutionise the slow, mysterious, inefficient, unreliable, expensive, all-pals-together legal system. The sheer force of popular feeling in 1945 at the end of that awful Second World War was such that their reforms could not have been blocked. Feeling was strong. We even had two communist MPs! The old pre-war ruling, incompetent, have-beens could have been sent packing.'

We hope you enjoyed this extract from
Vote for Terry Park!

For more information on this and
John's other books, visit

www.waybeyondschool.co.uk

 [@waybeyondschool](https://twitter.com/waybeyondschool)